

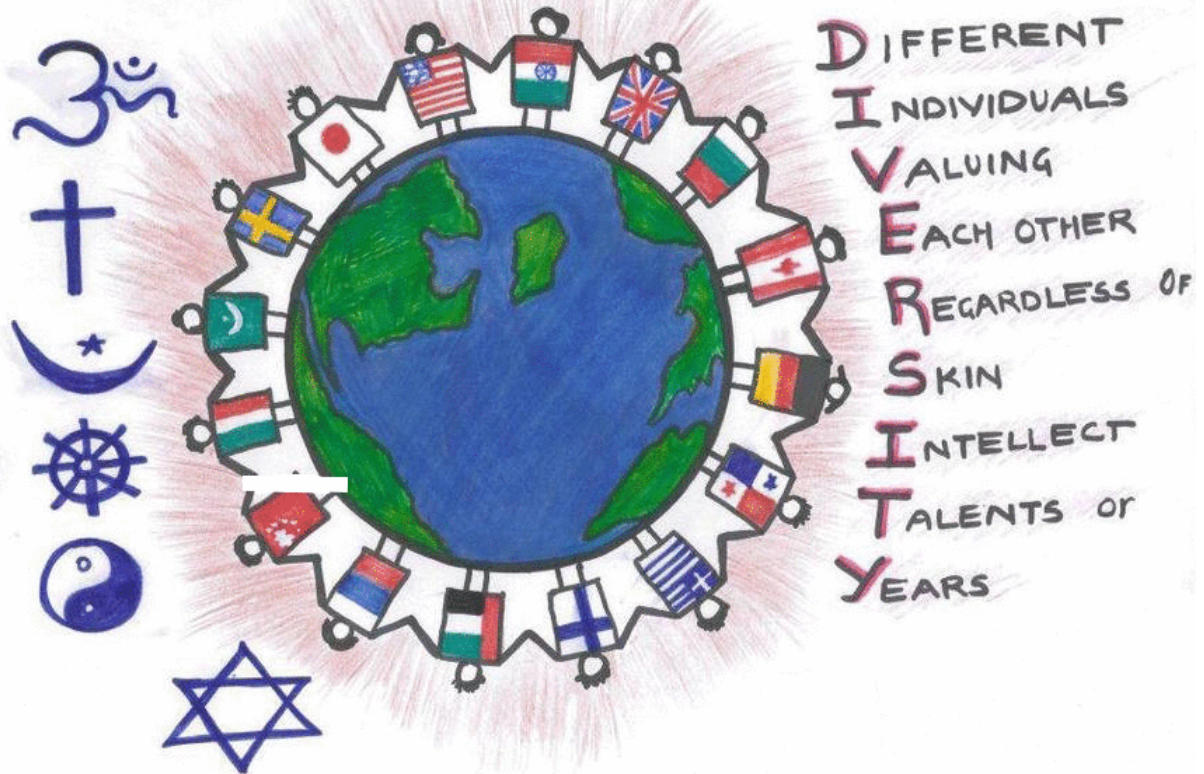
APRIL 30, 2015

COLUMBUS, INDIANA

2014

Columbus Human Rights Commission Annual Report

EMBRACE CULTURAL & RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY



2015 J. Irwin Miller Human Rights Contest Winner

Middle School Division: Isha Chavan

Teacher: Mindy Summers, Central Middle School



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Columbus, IN

The mission of the Columbus Human Rights Commission
is to lead Columbus in building and maintaining an
inclusive community by:

- ▶ enforcing the Human Rights Ordinance;
- ▶ educating the public;
- ▶ challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality; and
- ▶ empowering community members to advance this mission.

City Hall
123 Washington St. #5
Columbus, IN 47201
(812) 376-2532
TDD (812) 376-2720

humanrights@columbus.in.gov

www.columbus.in.gov/human-rights

Table of Contents

Columbus Human Rights Ordinance, Rules & Regulations	1
Columbus Human Rights Commission	2
Organizational Structure	2
Chairperson's Report	3
Director's Report	4
Columbus Human Rights Volunteer Commissioners	11
Compliance, Mediation, and Enforcement Activities	17
2014 Columbus Human Rights Commission Cases	21
2014 Goals	22
Columbus Human Rights Commission History and Purpose	23
2015 Benjamin M. King Essay & J. Irwin Miller Art Contest	27
2015 William R. Laws Human Rights Award Winner	36
In Memoriam	37
Acknowledgements	38

Columbus Human Rights Ordinance, Rules & Regulations

Ordinance

It is the public policy of the City to provide all persons an equal opportunity for an in education, employment, public accommodations and acquisition through purchase or rental of real property including but not limited to housing. Equal educational and employment opportunities and equal access to and use of public accommodations and equal opportunities for acquisition of real property and access to credit as defined in Indiana Code, 24-4.5-1-301, are declared to be civil rights.

The practice of denying these civil rights to a person by reason of race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry of such individual is contrary to the principles of equal opportunity stated in this chapter and shall be considered discriminatory practices.

The promotion of equal opportunity without regard to race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, disability, national origin or ancestry through enforcement, public education and other reasonable methods is the purpose of this chapter. It is also its purpose to protect employers, labor organizations, employment agencies, property owners, real estate brokers, lending institutions and insurance companies from unfounded charges of discrimination through the professional investigation and resolution of complaints. This chapter shall be construed broadly to effectuate its purpose.

The Municipal Code of the City of Columbus, Indiana § 9.24.020

Rules & Regulations

Through its Rules & Regulations Sections II, III, and IV, the Human Rights Commission prohibits discrimination on the basis of:

- ▶ age
- ▶ sexual orientation
- ▶ gender identity

In the areas of employment, housing, education, public accommodation or credit. Age, sexual orientation and / or gender identity complaints are processed through the Commission's Voluntary Mediation Program.

Columbus Human Rights Commission Organizational Structure

Volunteer Commissioners:	Term Ends:
Ian R. Kohen (Chair)	2016
John Stroh (Vice-Chair)	2018
Trena Carter (Treasurer)	2017
Kelly Benjamin (Secretary)	2016
Annette Barnes	2016
Richard Gold	2016
Rhea Baker-Ipek	2017
Greg Lewis	2018
Anthony McClendon	2018
Gilbert A. Palmer	2017
Sameer Samudra	2017
John Roberts	2014*
City Council Liaison: Tim Shuffett	
Commission Attorney: Jeff Logston	
Staff:	
Director: Aida J. Ramirez (promoted 07/2014)	
Director: Lorraine Smith (retired 07/2014)	
Deputy Director: Molly Connor (hired 08/2014)	
Secretary: Betsy Schuette	
* Resigned due to relocation	

Chairperson's Report



IAN R. KOHEN
Chairperson

Dear Mayor Brown, members of the Columbus City Council, and all Columbus residents:

The year 2014 was one of change.

First of all, you may notice that the picture above is not of Gil Palmer! In September 2014, Gil down from his position as chair of the Columbus Human Rights Commission, where he served with the highest set of standards for twenty (20) years. Gil's leadership and dedication has guided the Commission to grow in its mission to lead Columbus in building and maintaining an inclusive community by enforcing the Human Rights Ordinance, educating the public, challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality, and empowering community members to advance this mission. The Commission has and continues to benefit from Gil's patience, logical approach to problem solving, and ability to build a strong network of support from diverse individuals. The bar that Gil has set for the next chairperson is high, but he entrusted me to carry on his work and the Commission has since elected me as chair.

Not only has the role of chairperson changed hands, but Aida Ramirez was promoted as the new director of the Commission in July 2014. She has been an outstanding addition to the Commission! She has incredible energy and passion for her role as director. She has done a tremendous job succeeding her predecessors, Lorraine Smith and Arlette Cooper Tinsley. Aida's dedication to accomplishing the values of the Commission is excellent. She and I continue to work together in order to enhance the Commission's strengths and mission.

If that was not enough change, we also have Molly Connor as the new deputy director. Molly recently graduated from college and has a super background with a strong eagerness and passion for helping others. She is a fantastic addition to the Commission and will help us do great things. The longest serving member of the Commission's staff is our secretary, Betsy Schuette, who has been in the role for three and a half (3.5) years. She is the backbone of the office, keeping things on track and making sure we are able to support the complainants in the finest and most professional way possible. The staff is amazing!!

We also have an incredibly strong Board of Commissioners. Each has a drive and commitment to our mission and an enthusiasm to help in any way. The Commissioners reflect the diversity of the community with their depth of skills, experience, and dedication. Our Board is second to none.

In 2014, we worked to fulfill the Commission's mission by building stronger bonds within the community. Our connection with the Interfaith Forum, CAMEO, Pride Alliance, and other key organizations within Columbus is great. Due to our community ties, more individuals have utilized the Commission's resources and the caseload work has increased as a result. Our connection with the Spanish speaking community has improved, primarily due to Aida's Spanish speaking skills and knowledge. We also continued our growth within the city government with more frequent meetings with Mayor Brown and our City Council Liaison, Tim Shuffett.

Moving into 2015, we see further growth. The Commission has many goals, including more involvement with the youth, developing connections with local groups, increasing the awareness within the community of the Commission's services, and continuing to make Columbus a welcoming city.

With our staff and our Commissioners' support, we have a great opportunity to move the Columbus Human Rights Commission forward. I will strive to sustain the high standards that the former chair, Gil, has set. With my strong appreciation for Columbus and its citizens and my lifelong passion for helping others, I am genuinely excited about this role. With our strong team of the Human Rights Commission, we will do the best job we can to ensure that our Human Rights Commission maintains a key role in protecting the rights of all the people in Columbus, as it has for over 50 years.

Director's Report

"The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities; whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated."

— President John F. Kennedy, Civil Rights Address from Oval Office on July 11, 1963

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability and Accessibility

The Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability and Accessibility ("MACDA") is a committee that was formed in 2012 with the goal to identify and prioritize methods for educating the community on everyday practices that create barriers and to provide simple solutions to remove such barriers. With this goal in mind, MACDA was actively involved in the Columbus community during 2014. One of the subcommittees provided four (4) training sessions to the Columbus Police Department regarding the techniques for proper interactions with people who have disabilities. The subcommittee collaborated with former Chief Maddix to provide the training to his officers as a part of the department's annual officer training. In addition to the Police trainings, MACDA worked on a public awareness campaign to highlight the successes and personal stories of people with disabilities in employment. This public awareness campaign resulted in the collaboration of several community partners to create a video production titled "The World of Ability" that was funded through the Cummins Foundation's grant for \$25,000 and produced by Cantaloupe TV. These community partners included MACDA, the Columbus Human Rights Commission, the Center on Community Living and Careers, the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation, the Bartholomew County Transition Council, the Arc of Bartholomew County, Developmental Services, Inc., Stone Belt Arc, and Centerstone.

Audit and Review Committee for Citizen and Police Relations

The Commission has remained actively involved with the Audit and Review Committee for Citizen and Police Relations. The Audit and Review Committee, which was formed in 1992 under Mayor Stewart, reviews the appeals of citizen complaints concerning the Columbus Police Department. Members include a representative from the Human Rights Commission, the local president of the NAACP chapter, a police officer selected by members of the Columbus Police Department, three (3) citizens appointed by the Mayor, one (1) of which is a member of the local clergy, the City Personnel Manager, and the Personnel Review Committee. The Audit and Review Committee meets quarterly and the meetings are open to the public.

Community Education and Awareness

2014 Human Rights Commission's Annual Dinner Meeting

The Commission broke its attendance record for the Annual Dinner Meeting with over 430 guests in attendance. The Commission invited Mr. Tom Linebarger to be the keynote speaker. Mr. Linebarger, CEO of Cummins, Inc. spoke of the success of diversity and inclusion in business, including the integration of the LGBT community in Cummins.



► *Benjamin M. King Essay & J. Irwin Miller Art Contest*



The 2014 J. Irwin Miller Art and Benjamin M. King Essay Contests challenged students to create their own 21st Century Crusade. The Commission received approximately 230 entries from Bartholomew County students in grades five (5) through twelve (12). The Commission honored the winners of the contests at the Annual Dinner. The winners of the contests were Sveni Thalor, Kennedy Cook, Sarah Pankratz, Erica Song, Adhil Akbar, and Akina Minamikawa. The purpose of these contests is to educate and engage students on issues of diversity and human rights.

► *William R. Laws Human Rights Award*

The Commission presented the 2014 William R. Laws Human Rights Award to Tom Harmon, CEO of Taylor Brothers Construction Co., Inc. and president of Harmon Steel, Inc. at the Annual Dinner on April 9, 2014. Mr. Harmon accepted the award before a record-breaking crowd. Mr. Harmon is a successful business leader who has incorporated his business strategy into creating a more welcoming

community. He was a founding member of CAMEO and has maintained a key role in working closely with the Columbus Young Professionals and Leadership Bartholomew County Partnership. Additionally, Mr. Harmon has collaborated with several families to create the African American Fund of Bartholomew County as a means to provide grants in areas of education, leadership, development, economic, and career development to local members of the minority population.



TOM HARMON

*2014
Annual Dinner*



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Director Smith and Deputy Director Ramirez attended the MLK Breakfast at North High School. Director Smith, Deputy Director Ramirez, and Secretary Schuette provided technical assistance in developing the Columbus Civil Rights timeline for the breakfast per the request of the planning committee. Director Smith did a presentation about the history of civil rights in Columbus at the noon-time Rotary meeting.

Black History Month Presentation

Director Smith gave a presentation about Black History Month to the Cummins African and African American Affinity Group on February 6.

Civil Rights Symposium

Commissioner Annette Barnes, Director Smith, and Deputy Director Ramirez attended the Civil Rights Symposium in Indianapolis on March 4.

Northside Middle School

Commissioner Greg Lewis gave a presentation on the subject of human rights to the AC Global Studies class at Northside Middle School on March 13.

Heritage Fund Annual Meeting and Outreach Committee

Commissioners Gil Palmer, Annette Barnes, Rich Gold, and Kelly Benjamin attended the annual meeting for the Heritage Fund. Commissioner Kelly Benjamin became a new board member for the Heritage Fund in 2014. Director Smith continued her role as the chairperson of the Heritage Fund's Outreach Committee. Director Smith was also a member of the Grants Committee as well as the Search Committee for the selection of a new CEO after Sherry Stark retired. Current Director Ramirez is a new member of the Outreach Committee in 2015.

Bartholomew County Landlord's Association

The Bartholomew County Landlord's Association's president, Brad Grayson, invited Director Ramirez to speak at the August Bartholomew County Landlord's Association monthly meeting on August 9. She presented an overview of landlord-tenant law and corresponding legal updates for the landlords and property managers.

Men Take a Stand Against Domestic Violence

Commissioners Ian Kohen, Rich Gold, and Kelly Benjamin, along with Director Ramirez and Deputy Director Connor attended the Men Take a Stand Against Domestic Violence event on October 1 on the City Hall steps. The Healthy Communities Initiative and its Domestic Violence Action Team partnered with Turning Point Domestic Violence Services to sponsor this event in order to raise awareness about domestic violence. The speaker for the event was Jeffrey Bucholtz, a trainer and speaker for the organization We End Violence.

IUPUC Diversity Circles

Commissioner Kelly Benjamin, Director Ramirez, and Deputy Director Connor represented the Commission by attending the six (6)-week Diversity Circles event sponsored by IUPUC. Diversity Circles attempts to bring together a diverse group of participants to discuss issues of diversity, as well as to create and promote an understanding among different groups of people.

Human Rights and Civil Liberties Student Projects – New Tech High School

CSA New Tech teachers, Amy Oliver and Heather Hester, asked Director Ramirez to kick off their history and civil rights section. Director Ramirez discussed several topics to approximately 94 juniors, such as housing discrimination, landlord-tenant issues, employment discrimination, national origin/ race/ color discrimination, general civics, and the dangers of apathy. She challenged the students to assist the Commission's mission to educate the public and empower others. Director Ramirez, Deputy Director Connor, and Commissioner Sameer Samudra visited the students of CSA New Tech on October 23 to listen to their human rights and civil liberty project proposals.

Leadership Bartholomew County

The Campus President of Harrison College, Angela Shafer, asked Director Ramirez to speak at the November 18 meeting for the Leadership Bartholomew County class regarding the changing face of Columbus and the rising population of diverse residents.

IUPUC

Associate Professor of Management, Thomas Clerkin asked Director Ramirez to give a lecture to his class concerning human resource issues, issues of diversity in Columbus, and other relevant topics in employment law on December 1.

Networking with the Community

Staff and/or Commissioners continued to serve as a resource/liaison to the commission in a number of roles including organizations such as:

- ▶ Pride Alliance
- ▶ Inclusive Community Coalition (ICC)
- ▶ Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization (CAMEO)
- ▶ BCSC Anti-bullying Task Force
- ▶ BCSC Foundation
- ▶ BCSC Diversity Cabinet
- ▶ Teen Pregnancy Council
- ▶ Columbus Young Professionals (CYP)
- ▶ CYP Strategic Planning
- ▶ IUPUC Diversity Cabinet
- ▶ IUPUC Department of Education Advisory Board
- ▶ Columbus Safe Community Six Sigma Project
- ▶ SuCasa Board of Directors
- ▶ Heritage Fund Scholarship Committee Meetings
- ▶ African American Fund
- ▶ Interfaith Forum
- ▶ United Way Board of Directors
- ▶ Heritage Fund Outreach Committee - Engage Columbus
- ▶ Turning Point Board of Directors
- ▶ Healthy Communities Council
- ▶ Columbus Rotary
- ▶ Big Brothers Big Sisters of Bartholomew County
- ▶ Faith Ministries
- ▶ Legal Aid District 11
- ▶ kidscommons Board
- ▶ Columbus East Food Pantry



United Way of Bartholomew County

Commissioner Rich Gold was the chairperson of the United Way Board during 2014. Director Smith and Deputy Director Ramirez attended the United Way annual meeting on March 6. Director Ramirez accepted a position as a United Way board member in the latter part of 2014 for a term to begin in January 2015.

Laws Lecture Series

Director Smith assisted in the planning for the Laws Lecture Series, which featured Dr. Allan Boesak, the Desmond Tutu Chair for Peace, Global, Justice, and Reconciliation Studies at Christian Theological Seminary, as a guest speaker. The Commission cosponsored this event as an educational opportunity. Commissioner Annette Barnes attended the main lecture on May 3.

Stone Belt Art

In August, Director Ramirez attended the Stone Belt Freedom Celebration with Mayor Brown. Later in August, Stone Belt CEO, Leslie Green, along with other Stone Belt representatives and one artist, came to City Hall to view possible locations for a rotating art installation. The representatives decided to place artwork in both the Mayor's office and the Commission's office.

Students enrolled in Stone Belt's art program created the artwork that hangs in City Hall, all of which is for sale.



Shoulder to Shoulder Assembly

In the wake of the vandalism on the three (3) churches, many individuals and organizations came together to promote the freedom of religion and an inclusive community in the Shoulder to Shoulder Assembly. The Commission took the bias incidents seriously and offered itself as a resource for members of the community. Commissioners Kelly Benjamin and Gil Palmer and Deputy Director Connor attended the planning session for the assembly. Director Ramirez made brief remarks regarding the acts of vandalism during the Shoulder to Shoulder Assembly on September 8.

Diversity Coalition/ Collaborative Leadership Project

The year 2014 marked the beginning of the Diversity Coalition of Columbus project. The purpose of this project is to have local area leaders address a broad community issue. Mary Stroh, attorney at Sharpnack Bigley Stroh & Washburn LLP; Chad Phillips principal of Columbus Signature Academy-Lincoln campus; and Sondra Bolte, former HR Director, Cummins, Global Ethics Investigations, convened the project and accepted the challenge "[t]o work together to increase the number of

diverse individuals in meaningful positions of leadership.” The Coalition narrowed its focus to increasing the number of ethnically diverse teachers within BCSC. Director Ramirez was the City Hall point of contact for this project.

Title VI Audit

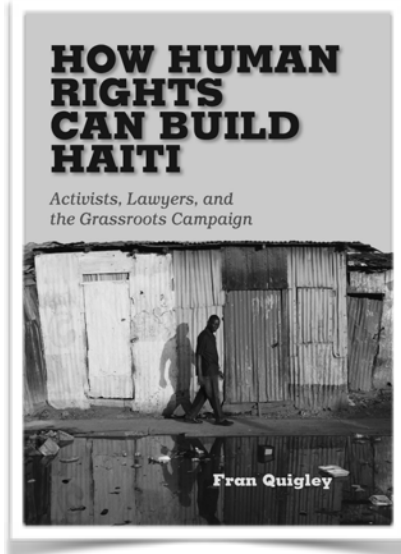
Director Ramirez provided technical assistance by participating in the INDOT/ U.S. Department of Transportation of Federal Highway Administration Title VI Audit of the City of Columbus.

NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet

Director Ramirez and Commissioners Ian Kohen, Gil Palmer, Kelly Benjamin, and Annette Barnes were present at the NAACP Freedom Fund Scholarship Banquet on November 1.

How Human Rights Can Build Haiti and How We Can Help – Fran Quigley Lecture

Director Ramirez and Deputy Director Connor attended Professor Fran Quigley’s lecture about his book *How Human Rights Can Build Haiti: The Lawyers, The Activists, The Grassroots Campaign* on November 10. Many community organizations sponsored this event, such as the Friends of Haiti, Konbit Lasante Pou Limonade, Peace & Justice Ministry of St. Bartholomew, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbus, IN, Columbus Peace Fellowship, Social Justice Committee at First Presbyterian, North Christian Church, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Pride Alliance of Columbus, and Art for AIDS. Director Ramirez introduced and gave introductory remarks about Professor Fran Quigley, who was a former professor and mentor at Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law.



Songs and Stories of Life

Director Ramirez and Commissioners Rich Gold, Gil Palmer, and Sameer Samudra attended the Songs and Stories Life benefit that was sponsored by Art for AIDS on December 4. There were performances by Bernard Woma and the Saakumu Dance Troupe, along with storytelling directed by Jan Lucas Grimm.

Staff Development

Director Ramirez accepted a board member position at the United Way of Bartholomew County. She also accepted a volunteer position on the IUPUC Diversity Council and membership with the Heritage Fund’s Outreach Committee.

Members of the Indiana Consortium on State and Local Human Rights Agencies elected Director Ramirez to be the council member at-large for the Consortium.

Deputy Director Connor attended trainings in employment law and legal issues in local governments.

Secretary Schuette attended a conference for administrative assistants.

Commission Office Transitions

The Commission underwent significant changes during 2014. After twenty eight (28) years of devoted service to Columbus-area civil and human rights, Director Smith retired and is spending more time with her family. The Commission thanks Director Smith for all of her hard work and fantastic contributions to human rights and the community. Thank you, Lorraine!



AIDA J. RAMÍREZ
Director

With the retirement of Director Smith in July 2014, Deputy Director Ramirez was promoted as the new director of the Commission. After a thorough job search, Director Ramirez hired Molly Connor to work in the capacity of the deputy director. Welcome, Molly!



MOLLY CONNOR
Deputy Director

Columbus Human Rights Volunteer Commissioners

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: ‘What are you doing for others?’” — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Human Rights Commission is comprised of Columbus residents appointed by City Council and sworn into office by the Mayor of Columbus. The Commissioners are volunteers whose skills and knowledge encompass business management, government, law, education, entrepreneurship, engineering, and clergy. The Commission has been able to effectively carry out its work because of the caliber of talent of the Commissioners appointed by City Council.

New Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission

After two decades as the chairperson for the Human Rights Commission, Commissioner Gil Palmer resigned from his position as the chairperson on September 24, 2014. Commissioner Gil Palmer was instrumental in extending the Commission’s influence and creating new community networks for the Commission. Under Commissioner Gil Palmer’s time as chair, the Commission amended its Rules and Regulations to include sexual orientation, age, and gender identification as protected classes, as well as broadening the definition of “familial status” in housing to include families associated with the LGBT community and the marital status of individuals who cohabitate together. As per the Rules and Regulations, Vice-Chairperson Ian Kohen assumed the role as chairperson. Although Commissioner Gil Palmer has resigned as chairperson, he still remains an active member of the

Commission. The Commission would like to thank Commissioner Gil Palmer for all of his hard work and dedication to promoting human rights in the community. Thank you, Gil!



Commissioner Gilbert A. Palmer was first appointed to the Commission in 1993. After serving twenty (20) years as the chairperson for the Commission, Commissioner Palmer officially resigned from his position as chair on September 24, 2014. Commissioner Palmer, a 1995 graduate of Leadership Bartholomew County, is a State Farm Insurance agent who works long hours at his office, and maintains longstanding service to the community. Commissioner Palmer continues his involvement in several organizations, such as Columbus

Rotary, Centerstone of Indiana and Centerstone Research Institute Boards, Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, IUPUC Board of Advisors, IUPUC Diversity Council, BCSC Diversity Leadership Committee, Bartholomew County Board of Zoning Appeals, Mill Race Center board, and the African American Fund Board. Commissioner Palmer was the recipient of IUPUC's 2011 Excellence in Diversity Award.

Commissioner Ian Kohen was appointed to the Commission in 2004. Commissioner Kohen was the vice-chairperson of the Commission until Commissioner Palmer resigned his position as chair in September, where Commissioner Kohen assumed the role as chair according to the Rules and Regulations.

He has been a member of the Columbus community for over twenty-two (22) years. Commissioner Kohen currently works at Cummins, Inc. and has roles in engineering, purchasing, Six Sigma, service, and is leading a sales / support organization for North

America. His outside interests include spending time with his wife, Mary, playing racquetball, being a Big Brother, working with teens as the adult leader of the Turning Point Dance Marathon, and being a part of the Columbus Rotary Club. Commissioner Kohen also has been active in the Audit and Review Committee for Citizen and Police Relations as well as a holding the position as a board member for Turning Point Domestic Violence Services. Commissioner Kohen has two sons, Max and Henry.



Commissioner John Stroh was appointed to the Commission in 2006 and currently serves as the vice-chairperson. He has lived in Columbus for over twenty-five (25) years with his wife and children, and is engaged in the practice of law. Earlier in his career, he worked as a public school teacher in Washington Township Public Schools where he met his wife, Beth, and developed an innovative team-teaching, multi-

to social justice, working as a church youth leader, school volunteer, professional actor, juvenile probation officer, U.S. Postal employee, volunteer Project Peace presenter, and volunteer lawyer for Legal Aid. Commissioner Stroh has represented the Commission as a facilitator in a Partners in Education class (PIE) on diversity issues and he served on the 2006 Ad Hoc Committee that first studied and then recommended changes to the Commission's Rules and Regulations to provide a mediation process for complaints of gender identity and sexual orientation discrimination. An experienced mediator, the Commission is fortunate to have Commissioner Stroh's service on the Commission. He serves as a liaison to the Inclusive Community Coalition (ICC).

Commissioner Kelly Benjamin was appointed to the Commission in 2013 and currently serves as the secretary. She has lived in Columbus since 2008 with her husband, Scott, and their three (3) children.

Commissioner Benjamin is currently the Commissioner of the IV-D Child Support Court and the attorney for the Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation. She has practiced law for over twenty-four (24) years, devoting fifteen (15) years to prosecuting crimes. She developed a specialty in domestic violence (DV), child abuse and sexual assault (SA) cases. Commissioner Benjamin became a certified trainer for DV and SA



investigation, prosecution and victim issues through the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance and Department of Justice in 1996-97 and has trained nationally. She implemented DV protocols for the Portage County District Attorney's office and investigative protocols for the Portage County Child Abuse/Neglect Multi-Disciplinary Team, which she coordinated. In addition, she was a member of the DV and SA Community Response Teams. In 1999, she was nominated for Wisconsin Prosecutor of the year for her work on the prosecution of a 20 year old shaken baby case which resulted in a guilty verdict and featured on an episode of "48 Hours." In 2001, she received the "Ted Long" CAPartners award, and in 2003 she received the Family Crisis Center "Angel Award", both for her work on DV issues and working with others in the community. In Bartholomew County, Commissioner Benjamin has been the chairperson of CRH's Healthy Community Domestic Violence Action Team for over 6 years and is a current board member for the Heritage Fund. She was awarded "Outstanding Prosecutor of the Year" in 2011 from the IN Coalition Against DV for her work as a Deputy Prosecutor in Bartholomew County and for her community work in helping to raise awareness around teen dating violence and DV. She has been involved with "Men Take a Stand," "Not on Our Ice," middle-school Safe Dates presentations (regarding teen dating violence), and sexual assault awareness events. Commissioner Benjamin was also one of several to be awarded "The Community Safety" award from Turning Point DV Services in both 2009 and 2010, as well as receive the "Service Pillar, Healthy Communities Volunteer of the Year" award from Columbus Regional Health in 2011. Commissioner Benjamin has also provided DV training for the Menominee Nation in Wisconsin, the National Indian Youth Police Academy, and has been an instructor for the Tribal Probation Academy sponsored by Fox Valley Technical College.



Commissioner Trena Carter, a twenty-seven (27)-year resident of Columbus, was appointed to the Commission in late 2006. Commissioner Carter is the treasurer of the Commission. Commissioner Carter works at Administrative Resources association (ARa), a non-profit governmental organization that works with local governments of member communities in Southern Indiana as extended community and economic development staff. ARa assists in planning and development of projects that enhance quality of life and then applies for and

manages governmental grants to implement those projects. She and a co-worker recently completed coursework earning the Economic Development Finance Professional Certification through the National Development Council. She and her husband, Mike, are the parents of two (2) daughters and now enjoy their family which includes two (2) “sons” and six (6) lively and beautiful grandchildren. Having raised her family in Columbus, she enjoys sharing the Columbus amenities with family and friends. Commissioner Carter has been a committed volunteer in the local schools, in Girl Scouts, in church, as well as participating in Leadership Bartholomew County and continuing to serve on the Church Council at Sandy Hook United Methodist Church. Through church she has also volunteered her time and resources in mission trips to Red Bird Mission, Kentucky and Belize. Commissioner Carter served on the Ad Hoc Committee that planned a special 45th anniversary celebration of the Commission as a part of the 2007 Annual Dinner meeting.

Commissioner Greg Lewis has served as Commissioner since 2005, and is the current Commission Liaison to CAMEO (Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization). He is the chair of the social studies department at Columbus East High School and Central Middle School. Commissioner Lewis has been teaching at Columbus East High School since 1994, and he previously taught at Central Middle School from 1992 to 1994. He is well known for his costumed portrayals of historic figures, including a different president each year since 1997 on Presidents' Day. He has lived in Columbus since 1984 with his wife, Nancy, and two children, Lauren and Austin. He was raised in Louisville, Kentucky and earned degrees from Miami University of Ohio, Indiana University, and Indiana Wesleyan University. He has demonstrated his commitment to public service through his volunteer work with the Columbus East Food Pantry, the American Red Cross—Bartholomew/Brown County Chapter, Dance Marathon for Turning Point, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Youth As Resources, Columbus Soccer Club, and many other community service groups, as well as being involved with many student groups at East High School. At Columbus East, Commissioner Lewis currently teaches Advance College Project U.S. History, a dual credit course through Indiana University, and he makes issues of social justice a major focus of his teaching. In his spare time, Commissioner Lewis enjoys spending time with his family, playing soccer, hiking, traveling, and biking.





Commissioner Tony McClendon has lived in Columbus for over two decades with his wife, Pat, and two (2) daughters. Currently, he is the Director of Multicultural Diversity for Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation. Commissioner McClendon is the pastor at Faith Ministries. He has served as the head football coach at Central Middle School and the assistant track coach at East High School. He has volunteered as a mentor at Northside Middle School in a program called TALKS, which focused on at-risk middle school boys. He is a native of Atlanta, Georgia, a graduate of Dartmouth College, works in sales management, and serves as an adjunct instructor in the English department of Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana-Columbus/Franklin. He has special skills as a public speaker that

he brings to the Commission, as well as a special interest in working with local youth. Commissioner McClendon served as vice-chair of the Commission in 2009, and in the past, he has represented the Commission as a facilitator in a Partners in Education class (PIE) on diversity issues. He has also facilitated youth discussions in local schools at the Commission's request. He has served also on the Commission's nominating committee.

Commissioner Rhea Baker-Ipek has a J.D. from Indiana University Maurer School of Law in Bloomington, Indiana and works as the Corporate Counsel for Elwood Staffing. Originally from Memphis, Tennessee, she earned a B.A. in Foreign Languages (French fluency); and a M.B.A. in International Business, both from the University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee. In addition to her coursework in the states, Commissioner Baker-Ipek has studied in France both as a graduate and undergraduate student. While obtaining her B.A., she studied at the Université Catholique de Lille in Lille, France. Additionally, while obtaining her M.B.A., she studied at the Université de Robert Schumann in Strasbourg, France. While in Strasbourg, she assisted Turkish lawyers at the European Court of Human Rights. Commissioner Baker-Ipek is an active member of the community and lives in Columbus with her husband and son. She loves Columbus and is self-described as a native Memphian turned Hoosier.



Commissioner Annette Barnes was appointed to the Commission in 2013. Commissioner Barnes, a 1986 graduate of Leadership Bartholomew County, is the mother of five (5) children and eleven (11) grandchildren. Commissioner Barnes comes to the Commission with significant volunteer experience in the Columbus community. She was a board member of Turning Point, a volunteer for the Mill Race Center, a volunteer for the Columbus Visitor's Center, and a volunteer for the Columbus Regional Hospital. She served as the executive director of the Youth Advocacy Commission and was also a guardian ad litem. Commissioner Barnes represents the religious

community on the Commission by bringing with her many years of experiences in the church community. She is a graduate of the Christian Theological Seminary and has a Master of Divinity. A member of St. Bartholomew Catholic Church, she volunteers as a member of the choir, serves as a Eucharistic minister and lector, and has also served on the Parish Council. Commissioner Barnes is also a retired board certified chaplain.

Commissioner Richard Gold was appointed to the Commission in 2013. He grew up in the Washington, D.C. metro area in an international household with his sisters during the 1960s. During this time, Commissioner Gold became aware of civil rights issues and social justice. His sensitivities to these issues increased through international assignments, diversity trainings at Cummins, and during his time living and working in Memphis, Tennessee in the 1980s. He has lived in Columbus for more than three (3) decades with his wife, Alice, and his three (3) children. He has been extensively involved in the issue of domestic violence since 1997, serving on the board of Turning Point, as chairperson of the Domestic Violence Action Team, and more recently as mentor to high school students for the annual Dance Marathon to benefit Turning Point. He has also served on the board of United Way of Bartholomew County, most recently as the chairperson. Commissioner Gold is also a facilitator of 7 Habits training. He received his B.A. and M.B.A. from the University of Michigan. He came to Columbus as a Cummins recruit in 1980 and served the company for 24 years, eventually as an officer of the company overseeing aftermarket and distribution. He left Cummins to become president of Brinks, Inc. He is currently owner of Brainstorm Print, an Indianapolis-based design, print, and marketing company that serves customers in Indianapolis, Columbus, and beyond the Midwest.

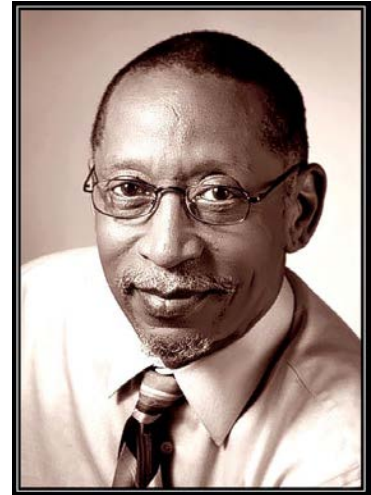


Commissioner Sameer Samudra was appointed to the Commission in 2014. He works at Cummins as a Customer Support Excellence Leader for Cummins Business Services. Commissioner Samudra has a M.S. in engineering and a M.B.A. from the Kelley School of Business in Bloomington. Commissioner Samudra has a diverse background that has made him passionate about human rights issues. He was born in Pune, India, and lived in Singapore for two (2) years. He moved to the United States when he was twenty-four (24) years old and has lived in Columbus for twelve (12) years.

Commissioner Samudra's work to increase awareness of diversity parallels the Commission's efforts to educate the public about diversity. He co-founded the Pride Affinity Group at Cummins and has led local Diversity Council events for Cummins, as well holding a leadership position for the Employee Development Committee for the South Asian Affinity Group at Cummins. He is married to

his husband, Amit Gokhale, and he is very active in the lives of his two (2) young nephews, Dhruv and Sharv, who are growing up in Columbus. Some of Commissioner Samudra's hobbies include cooking and dancing.

Commissioner John Roberts (term expired in 2014) was appointed to the Commission in 2005, and he served as the secretary until June 2014 when he resigned from the Commission. He joined the Columbus community fourteen (14) years ago. Commissioner Roberts is a retired associate professor of English, behavioral and social sciences at Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana-Columbus/Franklin. He was the dean of the School of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Ivy Tech from 2008-2013.



Commissioner Roberts was involved with the music ministry at Faith Ministries of Columbus. He has worked most of his life as an educator, teaching in the Louisville, Jefferson County, and Lexington Public Schools, the Archdiocese of Louisville, and St. Francis School in Goshen, Kentucky. When he first came to Columbus, Commissioner Roberts worked as the Christian Education Coordinator at First Presbyterian Church. He earned degrees at Morehead State University, University of Louisville, National University, and Northcentral University. Commissioner Roberts has a particular interest in low income and minority students, and while working in Louisville, he served on a team that developed a successful enrichment program for at-risk students in the Jefferson County Public Schools. He has also worked with the disability community, and has an interest in issues facing senior citizens. Commissioner Roberts is a father and a grandfather of four (4). He has served on the Ad Hoc Committee of the Commission, which studied and then recommended changes to the Rules and Regulations to provide a mediation process for complaints of sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination. He also chaired the Ad Hoc Committee that planned the Commission's 45th anniversary celebration. Commissioner Roberts received a doctorate in education from Northcentral University and specialized in curriculum and teaching. Commissioner Roberts has provided numerous presentations on diversity for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and he has served as facilitator for panel discussion "All Muslims Don't Look Alike." Commissioner Roberts and his husband, Thom, currently reside in Opelika, Alabama.

Compliance, Mediation, and Enforcement Activities

What is Discrimination?

Discrimination is the treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person based upon the legal protected class to which that person belongs rather than on individual merit or objective criteria. A "legal protected class" includes race, sex, color, sex, disability, national origin or ancestry, and familial status (in housing only).

Commission Purpose:

The Columbus Human Rights Commission enforces an anti-discrimination ordinance, a local law. The ordinance states that it is public policy of the City of Columbus to provide all of its residents equal opportunity and that it is unlawful to discriminate in the areas of:

- employment,
- housing,
- education,
- public accommodation,
- or credit
- on the basis of:
 - race,
 - religion,
 - color,
 - sex,
 - disability,
 - national origin or ancestry, or
 - familial status (housing only).

The Commission Jurisdiction – What We Can Do by Law:

If a person feels that they have been discriminated against in one of the above areas on one of the bases above, then that person can possibly receive assistance from the Human Rights staff. If the person's complaint falls within the Commission's jurisdiction, then the staff may file a formal complaint.

Because the Commission works within a specific jurisdiction based upon the law, the Commission can only investigate or mediate cases that fall within that jurisdiction. For example, the Commission covers the general area of housing, but we don't cover all complaints that deal with housing, only discrimination as it is defined by law and by the courts.

If the Commission files a case outside of our coverage or jurisdiction, the case can be dismissed and the complaint cannot be investigated. The Commission is bound by the rule of law to protect both the Complainant (the person who is making the complaint) and the Respondent (the person, company, or landlord against whom the complaint is being filed).

Commission Jurisdiction – What We Cannot Do by Law:

In cases that generally involve unsafe or unsanitary conditions or poor management practices, the Commission cannot get involved unless those conditions are because of (or not corrected due to) the tenant's race, sex, color, religion, national origin or ancestry or familial status (housing only). The Commission staff will evaluate each situation on a case by case basis to determine if there is enough information to file a complaint as defined by law. If we find that your case does not fall within our jurisdiction, in some cases we will make a referral to the agency who can help.

The Mediation and Investigative Process:

Mediation:

Once the Commission staff determines that there is enough to file a complaint based upon the facts and jurisdiction of the case, the Complainant signs the complaint and the Respondent is notified by the Human Rights office.

A case can take one of two paths: Investigation or Mediation.

Mediation:

If both parties agree to mediation, then a mediator is assigned to work with both the Complainant and the Respondent to resolve the situation.

If a resolution is reached, the parties will sign the agreement which is between the Complainant and the Respondent. It could mean backpay or monetary settlement, a letter of apology, training, policy changes, etc. The settlement depends on what is agreed upon to settle the complaint.

Mediation is strictly voluntary.

Investigation:

If the case goes to investigation, then Human Rights staff will look at evidence to determine if the evidence shows that there is probable cause (more likely than not) or no probable cause that discrimination occurred. Evidence could be in the form of documents related to the facts of the case, interviews with the Complainant, Respondent and/or witnesses, conducting on-site reviews, etc. It depends on the case.

Neutrality: The Commission must conduct a neutral investigation – examining the facts of the cases as it relates to the current state of the law in Columbus, at the state level, and at the federal level, as well as current case law! This is very important. We can't make a decision based upon on what we think or how we feel, but only on the evidence and the legal analysis based upon cases heard by the court on similar cases.

Post investigation:

After our investigation, the Commission will issue a finding of the investigation that is sent to the Complainant and the Respondent.

If there is Probable Cause, then the Commission will try and conciliate (come to an agreement) the case with the Respondent.

That agreement could mean different things. In housing, it could mean for example, return of deposit, rent, or housing unit. The goal is to make the person “whole” – to put the Complainant back at a place where he would have been had he or she not been discriminated against. The settlement depends on the facts and circumstances.

The other prong to the post-investigation is that if the Respondent does not want to conciliate, then it could go to a public hearing.

After examining the evidence, the Commission may find that the evidence does not support a finding of discrimination. If the Commission doesn't find Probable Cause, then we issue what is called a No Probable Cause finding.

The Complainant can appeal the No Probable Cause Finding before a Commissioner to show why the decision should be overturned to a Probable Cause.

Local Anti-Discrimination Enforcement:

In 2014, the Commission continued to see case filings in a number of areas. Staff worked to close seven (7) cases that were filed under the Human Rights Ordinance. During the 2014 year, all of the Commission's cases filed under the Human Rights Ordinance were in the area of employment. Approximately forty (40) percent these filings alleged sexual harassment and discrimination of national origin. Only twenty (20) percent of the filed complaints alleged racial discrimination. The Commission also continued to use mediation and technical assistance as enhancements to resolve issues of alleged discrimination in addition to investigation. Staff received over 200 calls from individuals who sought assistance from the Commission in 2014. Some of the calls that the staff received were outside of the Commission's jurisdiction, so staff provided technical assistance to those individuals by helping them draft charges with state and federal enforcement agencies, as well as offering services, i.e. writing service letter requests or providing pertinent legal information. Staff filed approximately 58% of its technical assists with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, around 10% with the Housing Urban Development, about 10% with the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, about 5% with the Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and an approximation of 16% of the technical assists consisted of specific services that the Commission provided internally.

The Commission takes pride in its ability to resolve issues of discrimination. One example of a technical assist that the Commission offered resulted in a successful outcome for a local civil rights advocacy group. The Commission negotiated a settlement between a local civil rights advocacy group and a government agency that allowed for a strategic implementation of the local civil rights advocacy group's human rights goals in a public accommodation. The Commission coordinated with the government agency to ensure legal compliance in that area of public accommodation.

2014 Columbus Human Rights Commission Cases

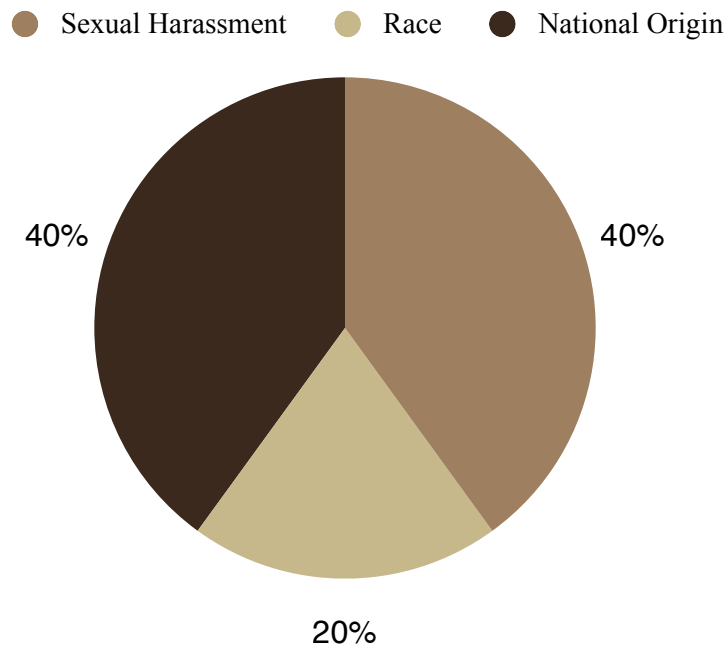


Chart 1. Subclasses of discrimination cases filed under the Columbus ordinance in employment in 2014

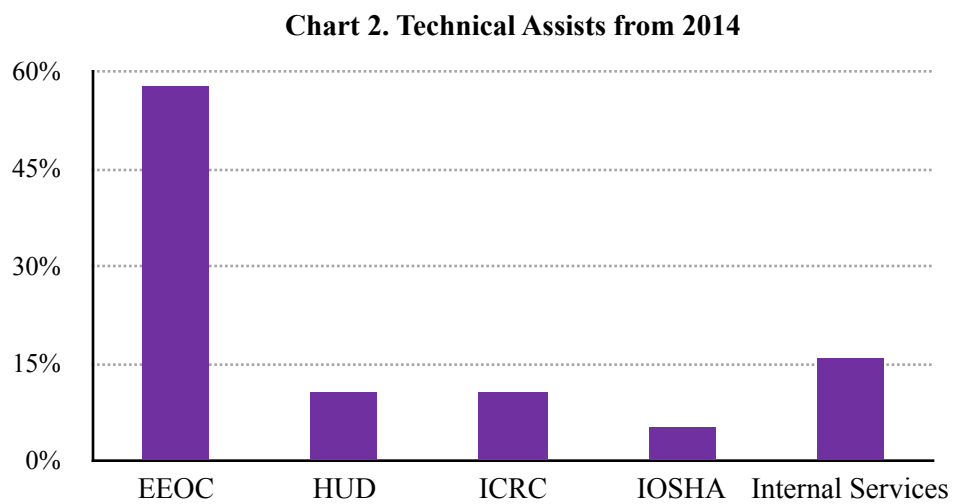


Chart 2. Technical Assists from 2014

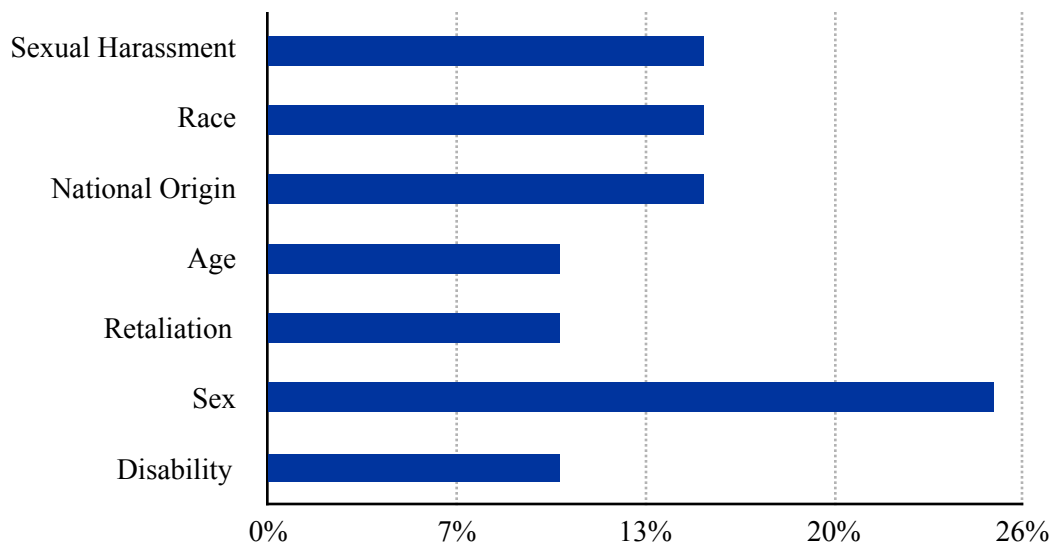


Chart 3: Subclasses of cases filed with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2014

2014 Goals

Goal I – Enforcing the Ordinance – Effective case processing as a key staff priority

Goal II – Educating the Public – Implementation of current strategies and implementation of creative and innovative strategies that promote a Welcoming Community, education on anti-discrimination law, education on the work of the Commission and human rights history and diversity

Goal III – Networking with the Community – Maintain key stakeholder relationships with various welcoming community and diversity-related groups by becoming an organization knowledgeable on potential discrimination issues in the community

Goal IV – Challenging attitudes and systems that create barriers to equality – Become a leader and or partner in the development of innovative strategies and initiatives that break down systemic discrimination by providing solutions on discrimination issues proactively through the development of community networks; by creating awareness on Welcoming Community issues and by assisting Welcoming Community and diversity-oriented groups in their work including:

- Convening and facilitating Mayor’s Council on Disability and Accessibility
- As applicable, serve as co-convener of proposed Welcoming Community Stakeholder Council

- Increasing Community Disability Issues Awareness
- Providing assistance on the City of Columbus ADA Transition Plan as requested and appropriate
- Support Heritage Fund Welcoming Community Catalyst Work
- Support Mayor's City-wide strategic plan regarding Welcoming Community

— Synopsis of Goals Passed by Columbus Human Rights Commission Board October 2013

Columbus Human Rights Commission History and Purpose

History

The Columbus Human Rights Commission had its beginnings in 1962 when Mayor E. A. Welmer created the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations. The Commission began as a small group of concerned and respected local citizens with no power of legal enforcement. Complaints were filed in the Mayor's office or with individual Commissioners appointed by the Mayor. The Commissioners' only tool was their personal commitment to the formidable work of the Commission and their powers of verbal persuasion—they called it "friendly persuasion." The Commission, at this time, functioned under challenging conditions, without enforcement powers or city funding.

In 1972, because the City Council recognized the need for the Commission to have stronger tools with which to combat discrimination, the City Council passed an Ordinance that gave the Commission legal enforcement powers. At this time, the name was changed from the Mayor's Commission on Human Relations to the Columbus Human Rights Commission. In 1975, a part-time Administrative Assistant for the Commission was hired and funded by the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA). In 1977, the City Council reaffirmed its commitment by funding the Commission, in essence saying that this community does not tolerate discrimination. In the 1980s and then subsequently in 1992, the jurisdiction and scope of the Human Rights Ordinance was expanded by City Council, transforming the Columbus Human Rights Commission into the comprehensive civil rights enforcement agency it is today. In 2006, the Rules and Regulations were amended to give protected status in the form of voluntary mediation to those discriminated against in the areas of sexual orientation, gender identity, and age. Most recently in 2013, the Rules and Regulations were amended to broaden the definition of "familial status" to include members of families that identify as LGBT and the marital status of individuals who cohabitate together.

Purpose of Local Commissions

Most historians place the beginning of the civil rights movement in the era 1950 through 1968. Beginning in 1967 with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1967, the federal government passed the

most significant civil rights legislation that this country would ever see and for the first time, the full force of the federal government was exercised against discrimination in this country. This passage sent a strong message that this country stood firmly behind the concepts of equal opportunity and non-segregation. The passage of the legislation signaled that discrimination is not bound by state, region or locality and that local governments must support the effort of anti-discrimination. Just as the federal government serves as the conscience of the nation regarding discrimination, localities serve as the conscience of cities and towns. To address the broad nature of discrimination, which can occur in various facets of community life, many states and localities within those states created human rights commissions to fill in the gaps between federal, state and local efforts to help combat discrimination. The continuing attack on the problem of discrimination must be equally broad. It must be both private and public – it must be conducted at national, state, and local levels – and it must include action from the legislative, judicial and executive branches. Discrimination knows no sectional or state boundaries. As a result, the Columbus Human Rights Commission currently operates in a legal system of parallel jurisdiction – the local ordinance enforced by the Commission contains language very similar to state statute, enforced by the Indiana Civil Rights Commission, and federal statutes, enforced by various federal government agencies.

Even with progress over the past four decades, discrimination persists and limits opportunity – all of which negates the economic health and quality of life of a community. As a result, local commissions exist to make sure that everyone in the community has an equal opportunity in employment, housing, education, credit and public accommodations. Local commissions don't exist to make money or produce a profit; it doesn't produce a tangible product. But a fundamental question for many is: how do local Commissions, such as the Columbus Human Rights Commission, contribute to the overall success and welcoming nature of a community?

The Columbus Human Rights Commission contributes to Columbus' vitality and excellent quality of life by playing an integral role in a broad circle of remedies in five main areas: (1) Strategic partnering in Economic Development, (2) Comprehensive Enforcement of Civil Rights Laws, (3) Proactive Enforcement by providing free technical assistance to local businesses and community outreach to organizations, (4) the ability to respond to rapidly changing demographics, and (5) in providing local solutions to local problems.

► The Commission is a strategic partner in economic development.

Clearly, discrimination hampers the economic growth of a community by preventing the maximum development and utilization of our manpower. The federal and state governments have decided that local civil rights enforcement is a priority they wish to encourage because federal and state civil rights agencies continue to be over-burdened with cases, under-staffed and stretched resources and they cannot always provide the most comprehensive enforcement of civil rights law. As a result, some federal and state grants require a community to have local civil rights enforcement to even be considered for the grant money, and most federal and state grants favor applicants who have local enforcement of civil rights. Although the city's budget is made up of local tax dollars, a portion of the city's budget each year is made up of federal and state funds, not just local tax dollars. And because the federal and state governments have control over these taxpayer-supported funds, they can choose which communities will receive federal and state funds. The local Commission helps the city receive over 2 million dollars a year in state and federal grants for economic development that make possible

senior housing, affordable housing, city buses and bus transportation, better roads and bridges, better technology for crime-fighting and many other improvements.

- ▶ The Commission provides more comprehensive enforcement of civil rights laws.

The city's decision to have local civil rights enforcement is like the city's decision to have a local police force—the county's sheriff's department is still there and the state police are still there, and the FBI is still there, but citizens of Columbus benefit by getting a police response to their 911 call in roughly five minutes, rather than possibly waiting longer if another law enforcement agency had to respond. By having local enforcement of civil rights, the city receives more comprehensive enforcement. The strong institutional presence of the local commission helps maximize equal opportunity services.

Local Commissions ensure that individuals have meaningful access to EEO technical expertise and the investigatory process. By responding effectively to a wide array of discrimination cases that have varying levels of complexity, claimants are ensured that they have access to enforcement processes to vindicate citizens' rights.

The Commission has jurisdiction to look into complaints filed against employers with six or more employees, which is smaller than the EEOC's jurisdiction. The Columbus Human Rights Commission is the only agency required to investigate all officially filed complaints of discrimination in the City of Columbus. What does that mean in real terms? It means the little guy can get help. It means a server in a restaurant who is sexually harassed can get help, even if she does not work for a national chain of restaurants. The Columbus Human Rights Commission provides more comprehensive enforcement and a quicker response.

- ▶ The Commission provides cost effective technical assistance to local businesses and community outreach programs, in order to prevent local problems before they occur.

While Columbus is home to several Fortune 500 companies who have attorneys and human resource professionals working in-house, Columbus is also home to many small businesses that do not have the resources to have an attorney on retainer or have a large personnel department. Yet smaller businesses must comply with civil rights laws, too, and those same businesses support the work of the Commission through their payment of local tax dollars, as they do all local government services. The Commission provides local businesses with technical assistance without charge that is not available from state and federal agencies.

The staff of the Commission answer business people's questions on the phone, provide model policies and other resources, and provide training without charge to local employers and their employees, to local property management companies and their employees, to local public and private schools, and to local places of public accommodation. Area businesses receive an extremely high level of service from the Commission, which they support through their payment of local taxes. A local commission facilitates cost effective, efficient delivery of services in the prevention of discrimination and remedy of discrimination.

The intangible value of these trainings and resources offered by the Commission come in the form of having a direct impact upon changed behavior in our schools, workplaces and public accommodations, with a good deal of the work done behind the scenes. For instance, so much work done behind the scenes is nevertheless very valuable to the community, and those individualized

resources and support are not available on a federal and state level. The local commission provides cost-effective, efficient delivery of human rights services.

- ▶ The Commission provides Columbus with the ability to respond to rapidly changing demographics.

The Columbus community is changing demographically, which creates a need to respond in a way that facilitates community growth and stability and allows all community members to prosper.

Changing demographics and shifting population trends only heighten the critical need for outreach into local communities. People must have confidence in a community's ability to respond effectively when they seek assistance in vindicating their rights. But the presence of the Columbus Human Rights Commission makes Columbus well positioned to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse community it serves. As a critical piece to creating a welcoming community and a healthy quality of life, the Columbus Human Rights Commission partners with community groups to educate community members about their legal rights and to educate employers about their legal obligations – while also bridging understanding on cultural differences.

- ▶ The Commission provides Columbus with local solutions to local problems.

The Commission, a local, all-volunteer eleven-member Board, ensures that here is a local alternative – local solutions to local problems, rather than civil rights law enforcement agencies from the federal government and the state government being the only alternative—and therefore coming to Columbus to investigate and enforce all civil rights violations.

The Commission was originally founded when there was no financial incentive to provide local enforcement of civil rights. Local citizens saw that there were problems of discrimination in Columbus that were not being adequately addressed by state and federal agencies, and decided to address them locally. According to testimony from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, it is generally held that a complaint handled at the local level affords an opportunity for a more expedient response and a greater potential for a satisfactory resolution. Many Columbus citizens believed, and still believe that the best solutions to challenges facing this community will come from within this community. All staff persons are required to live in or adjacent to Bartholomew County, and all of the volunteers who serve as Commissioners live in Bartholomew County. The Commission is controlled by an eleven-member Board of volunteers, appointed by City Council and sworn into office by the Mayor. The community originally founded the Commission because it was the right thing to do, and the reason the Commission continues to serve the community is not only because it makes sense financially, but simply because it is the right thing to do.

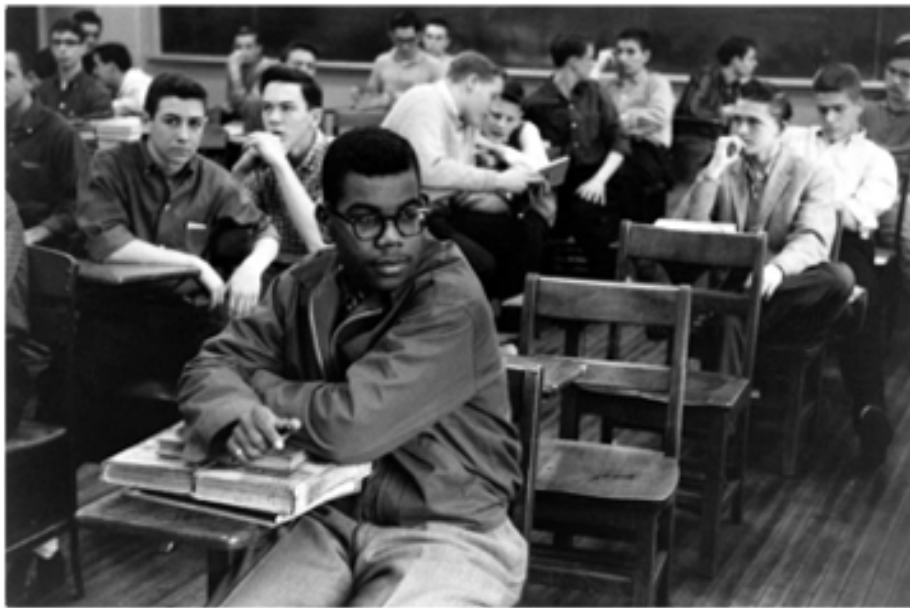
The Commission's fifty-year history stands for the principle that Columbus values all members of the community. Columbus is open to persons of all races, religions, abilities and ethnic backgrounds to join the community, contribute, and be fully included. Beginning in 1962, with wisdom and foresight, elected officials and other community leaders created the Commission in order to enforce the principles of fair treatment, respect, and inclusion, and with that same wisdom and foresight, today's elected officials and community leaders continue to sustain a strong Human Rights Commission. The continued support of City Council members and Mayors from both political parties has given Columbus a progressive human rights ordinance that identifies our community as committed to equal treatment and willing to strive toward full inclusion in all aspects of community life.

2015 Benjamin M. King Essay & J. Irwin Miller Art Contest

This year's theme was "Diversity in Education." Students received an entry form that contained a brief introduction and a question:

"Diversity programs in school are a recent development. Historically, many people did not want diversity in schools and kept separate schools for people of different races, backgrounds, and beliefs. Do you think diversity is an essential part of education?"

The objective of this year's contests was for students to demonstrate the value of diversity in education through their artwork and essays. Packets that provided more detail for both the art and essay contests were available on the Commission's website in addition to the entry form. The packets had pictures and quotes, such as the ones shown below, to provide context and to inspire students to submit fantastic entries.



Student Louis Cousins sits in newly desegregated Maury High School in Norfolk, VA in 1959. Photographed by Paul Schultzer/ LIFE.

"It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength. We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of that tapestry are equal in value no matter their color."

—Maya Angelou

The Commission received a record breaking number of 454 entries from students all over Bartholomew County, thanks to the efforts from teachers, parents, and community members who encouraged students to participate in the contests. Due to the high volume of submissions, many community members showed their support for the Commission by agreeing to judge the students' entries. The Commission is thankful for all of the art and essay judges who volunteered their time over a course of several weeks to read essays, review artwork, and select the winners. The Commission would like to recognize and commend these individuals for an excellent job done!

Melissa Denny	Andy Young	Nida Khan Farooq	Andrea Bartels
Mary Claire Speckner	Ric King	Susi Gentry	Larry Fisher
Stephanee Squires-Roberts	Rhea Baker-Ipek	Kathy Caldie	Amy Oliver
Jonathan Schneider	Kenneth Whipker	Debra East	Magda Gamez
Shana Cureton-McMurray	Alicia Taulman	Carlos Laverty	Guru Charan
Carol Kostrezwsky	Raina Jones	Jim Lienhoop	Anna Carmon
Cynthia Scott	Katie Beck	Kristin Munn	Kelly Baker
Kimberly Gatten	Colleen Stone	Brian Payne	Lorraine Smith
Sara Warfield	Lisa Duke	Grace Kestler	J.D. Morris
Melissa Wilson	Mary Ferdon	Emilie Pinkston	Sherrie Grable
Karen Shrode			

The above community judges anonymously selected a winner in each of the categories listed below. Winners of the Benjamin M. King Essay and J. Irwin Miller Art contests are honored at the Commission's Annual Dinner Meeting where they are presented with a check for \$75 and a relevant book.

The Commission congratulates these winners:

2015 Benjamin M. King Essay Contest Winners

Elementary School Division:	Jack Tregoning	Southside Elementary School
Middle School Division:	Sveni Thalor	Central Middle School
High School Division:	Sarah Kilbarger-Stumpff	East High School

2015 J. Irwin Miller Art Contest Winners

Elementary School Division:	Shivali Singireddy	Parkside Elementary School
Middle School Division:	Isha Chavan	Central Middle School
High School Division:	Emma Finerfrock	East High School

(Verbatim Entry)

Diversity in Education

By: Jack Tregoning, grade 6

Teacher: Becky Williams, Southside Elementary School

Education is a natural human right. No one should be deprived of an education. Public schools were created to help foster learning. Learning comes not only from books, but from the people around you. Having different people who are a variety of races and backgrounds in your learning experience is beneficial, and it helps you be more comfortable around people who are different from yourself. To know others who are diverse helps you look at the world from a new perspective and with a more open mind. Everyone deserves to have the opportunity to get an education and to learn from classmates.

There is a vast history of education not being provided to people who are different. A key fear of the human race is fear of the unknown. Being unfamiliar with a person, culture, or race makes the dominant class want to keep others away from them and out of power. Throughout history, individuals have been set in a lower class for just being different. This can be found in cultures from ancient Mesopotamia all the way to the present in America. In Greece, only the upper class could get

an education. Even today, not everyone in the world is allowed to get an education. Some groups are afraid of losing power. One way they strive to keep authority is to keep others uneducated because knowledge is power. If people are also uneducated, the authorities don't have to explain laws or policies because they can just blame citizens for being ignorant. Education gives people the power to question and to change their world. Thankfully, throughout history, people have fought for their right to learn. People are changing the world with education.

Although I believe in diversity in education and the right to learn, this essay is challenging for me. I personally have been very lucky with my educational experiences. The only places that I have heard about unfair educational rights are on the news, in history, and in books like *Sounder*. The boy in *Sounder* dreams of learning how to read. In the novel, he has to go a long way from his home to do so. Today, I am lucky to not have to leave my family to get an education. I am open to diverse people because I have been fortunate enough to go to a diverse school since kindergarten. As a result, I am comfortable around different races and cultures. My public school has students who are a variety of races and come from a variety of cultures such as Austrian, Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Hispanic, British, African-American, and American. Both boys and girls also attend my school. In addition, I am comfortable around people with a different sexual orientation and individuals with disabilities. I have grown up with an aunt who is both legally blind and gay. My aunt is independent and can do almost anything, except for driving. At the age of three, I was in my aunts' wedding. I learned that people can love who they want to love. They do the same things that a normal family does. As a result of all of my experiences, I feel that I have learned a lot about the world around me from listening to my classmates. I have learned that even though people may not look the same or come from the same place, they all should be treated equally because they all have something to contribute to the world.

In the future, I plan on becoming a paleontologist. This career could take me all over the world searching for fossils. Being comfortable around people of different cultures and races is a necessity. I will need to interact respectfully and appropriately with the individuals who I meet and with whom I work. I believe that learning to listen to others and respect their knowledge and experiences will make me a more understanding and wiser person.

Diversity in education is an important thing. It can open your eyes to different cultures. New people can bring faraway lands closer to home. Diverse people can brighten up your day. They can help you make incredible memories. A diversity of people brings a diversity of ideas, which contribute to the education of everyone. It is not the technology that makes the earth a wonderful planet. It is the diversity of its amazing inhabitants that makes the earth a remarkable planet.

(Verbatim Entry)

Diversity in Education

By: Sveni Thalor, grade 7

Teacher: Mindy Summers, Central Middle School

On the topic of diversity in education, the world has had many advances over the years. In education, diversity is essential. Many don't realize or acknowledge how important diversity is in

learning, whether it be race, ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, or sexual orientation. Now, schools in the United States are more diverse than ever, and some take that for granted.

First of all, education has not always been diverse. There have been bias, discrimination, and segregation. For example, the Little Rock Nine were nine African-American teenagers who were the first black students to attend a previously all-white school. They had to be escorted into the school by the Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne. On the historic day of September 25, 1957, the nine made their way into Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, where a hostile environment waited for them. Many of the white teenagers in the school held prejudice against them.

Another example is Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani girl and Nobel Peace Prize winner, was shot in the head by the Taliban, a Pakistani Islamic extremist group, for standing up for her education. The Taliban believes that girls should not go to school. Yousafzai had been blogging and making public appearances about her rights for years and had been threatened by the Taliban. Despite this, she continued speaking out about her rights to have an education because she and her family believed that the Taliban would not actually harm a child. She was wrong. On October 9, 2012, a man boarded her bus and shot her. She recovered from the bullet and is currently in England, still active in her work.

Personally, my previous schools have all been very diverse, and I believe this positively contributed to my education. In the past, I have done various projects on cultures of different countries, and people of different backgrounds have shared information about their cultures. This has contributed to my knowledge of different cultures and has enriched my understanding of current events. In addition, it has allowed me to gain further understanding into the lives of people living in other places. Even though I have been exposed to stereotypes about different races and religions, my knowledge of different cultures has prevented me from believing such derogatory stereotypes.

Secondly, being acquainted with those different from a person is important. Knowing such a person helps one understand more about different cultures and traditions. Taking part in celebrations or ceremonies of different cultures is interesting, not to mention, fun! For example, I have been to many Indian cultural events, such as weddings and religious events. Also, I have been to Western-style cultural events, and this has greatly contributed to my knowledge of cultures.

Thirdly, different perspectives provide valuable insight. People from different places can help provide information on the needs of different people. For example, those growing up poor could relate information on how to best help the underprivileged. A person of race who has been discriminated against can give information on how to prevent discrimination in the future. Women and girls can relate stereotypes and prejudice held by some men that have inhibited their success and have made it harder for them to succeed.

Those opposing this viewpoint may say that, for years, there has been much segregation in education, and schools got along nicely. Before ways to quickly travel overseas for little money (for example, commercial airplanes) were innovated, many people did not travel very far permanently. Think of ancient times. In terms of education, many children were homeschooled, and schools where many children could go to learn were not as common as they are today. Back then, children were intelligent and grew up to do great things. Innovations were developed in areas that were not diverse. This argument is incorrect because there have been many more inventions after diversity in education became more prevalent. So many of today's modern technologies were developed because

scientists and engineers from many different backgrounds and cultures came together, shared what they knew, and created something amazing. Women scientists were unheard of even a hundred years ago. Now, women encompass 38% of scientists and engineers. This number is low, but a large increase from a hundred years ago. Think how much more quickly the human race would have progressed had there been more diversity in education.

Despite all of our advancements in diversity, we still have problems today. In America, the majority of college degrees earned are earned by white men. Asians earn 7% of college degrees, and they comprise 4% of the population, and there is a gender gap of 10%. Caucasians make up 60% of the population, earn 71 % of college degrees, and have a gender gap of 12%. Native Americans make up 1 % of the population, earn 1 % of college degrees, and have a gender gap of 22%. African-Americans are 15% of the population, earn 10% of college degrees, and have a gender gap of 32%. Finally, Hispanics are 18% of the population, earn 9% of college degrees, and have a gender gap of 22%. This shows that there is a large gap in race and gender, and this issue must be resolved.

In conclusion, diversity is a key part of education, and without it, technology would be much less advanced today. Humans still have much to do in the area of diversity and equal access. Not enough people are aware that there are people living in underdeveloped countries who lack basic needs like food or water. In America, people have worked wonders in the field of diverse education, but in other countries, education for all is unheard of. The importance of ensuring diversity exists in education is greater than most people realize. We must embrace diversity and utilize it in order to achieve the goals of humankind. As President George H. W. Bush once said, "We are a nation of communities ... a brilliant diversity spread like stars, like a thousand points of light in a broad and peaceful sky."

(Verbatim Entry)

Diversity: The Key Ingredient

By: Sarah Kilbarger-Stumpff, grade 10

Teacher: Greg Lewis, East High School

Many children grow up hearing the folk tale "Stone Soup." In this anecdote, a hungry traveler happens upon a town. Unfortunately, there had recently been a famine in the land, so none of the villagers were willing to share any of their food. Undeterred, the traveler started boiling a pot of water in the town square. One curious towns person asked him what he was doing and wondered if he could help. The traveler stated that he was going to make soup out of a stone for his supper and asked that the towns person provide a potato. One by one, curious villagers asked the traveler what he was doing, and intrigued, one by one, they provided him with ingredients for soup. At the end of the day, the whole village feasted together on this miraculous "soup made of stones."

In this story, the villagers had little to eat, and the traveler had nothing. However, after they collaborated, the entire village is able to dine copiously. This story can be applied to so many

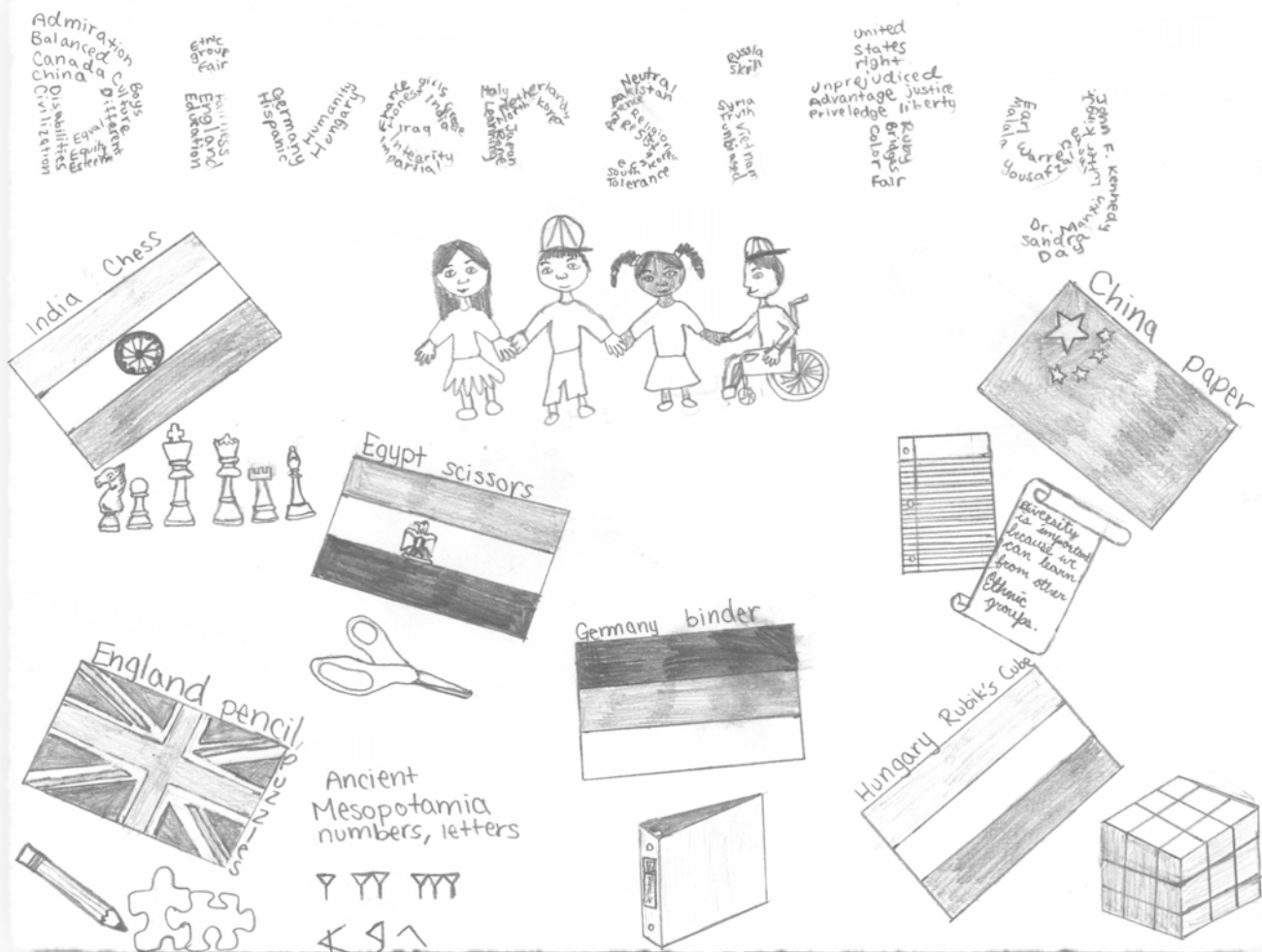
situations. Like the villagers, we all have different attributes we can bring to the table. When everyone collaborates and brings different experiences, histories, and opinions together, we can create a product that's far more rich, brilliant, and fruitful than anything any individual could do alone. When different cultures come together and share their experiences, everyone benefits.

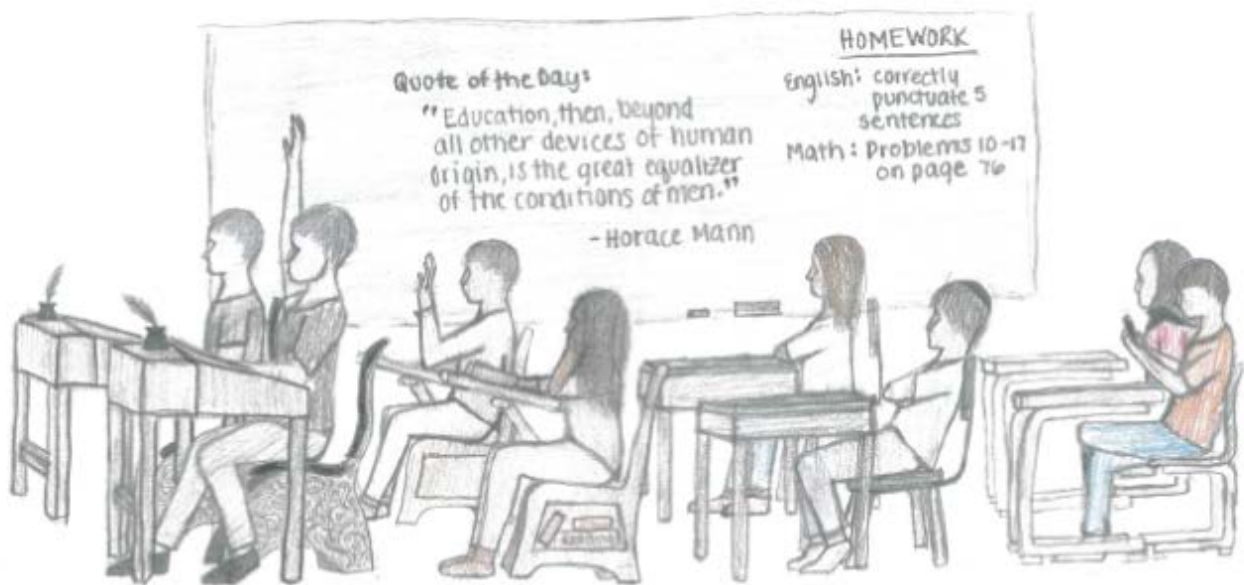
However, racially segregated schools used to be like the traveler, with just his pot of water and stone. At that time, the educational experience was like the boiling water, bland and insubstantial. Not only did the lack of diversity deprive students of opportunities for learning and growth, segregation in schools also fostered intolerance by sharpening divides between groups of people. Luckily, throughout history, there have been people like the traveler, who act as catalysts for change and bring people together. One such mover and shaker was Oliver Brown, whose daughter Linda was denied admission to a white school. As a result of his historic court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, it was deemed illegal for schools to be separated by race, and countless schools were integrated. However, the fight for diversity in schools is far from over; our soup is not done cooking. Today, activists toil to provide equal opportunities for everyone to learn, including Malala Yousafzai, who tries to make sure girls worldwide are allowed in schools. There are also organizations such as GSLEN (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network) that ensure schools aren't hostile environments, and are instead places where students feel safe to express themselves and share their perspectives of the world.

The work that these people do is so incredibly important. Diversity in schools helps students to grow in so many different ways. Engaging with people from a myriad of backgrounds helps to teach students how to communicate with others effectively. This interaction also challenges preconceived stereotypes students might have and fosters mutual respect between groups. There have even been studies that have shown that racial diversity on college campuses increases overall academic performances (Kerby).

Interacting with many different people during key developmental years also prepares children for their future careers. Today's economy is very much a global one, and skills developed in a diverse school environment, such as communicating with and learning from people with different perspectives, will be invaluable to students as they enter the workforce. Many companies actually seek out multifarious groups of people, ensuring that their businesses are environments of collaboration, as research regularly shows that diversity encourages creativity and innovation (Kerby). Making sure the school environment is a safe place for differences to be celebrated is part of education's role of preparing students for the "real world."

Diversity plays a vital role in education. There are so many benefits to students engaging with those who have different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives than them. Luckily, there are many advocates for diversity in and access to education. The work that they do is important for everyone, student or not, and should be given our full support.





2015 J. Irwin Miller Human Rights Contest Winner
High School Division: Emma Finerfrock
Teacher: Greg Lewis, East High School

2015 William R. Laws Human Rights Award Winner



GILBERT A. PALMER

During the Commission's special session on March 13, the Commissioners selected Palmer, Smith, and Tinsley for their collective impact during their tenure at the Commission in making Columbus a more welcoming and inclusive community. The Laws Award Nominating Committee, comprised of Chairperson Ian Kohen and Commissioners Greg Lewis and Trena Carter, made this recommendation as a way to award extraordinary service. These three (3) individuals have a combined 63 years of service to the community in the area of civil and human rights and were intimately involved in shaping the direction of the Commission as it stands today.

The Committee referred to Palmer, Smith and Tinsley as the "triumvirate" for their collaborative leadership in the community, with involvements in key community initiatives such as the Welcoming Community studies, the creation of the Columbus Area Multi-Ethnic Organization (CAMEO), the facilitation of the Audit and Review Committee for Citizen and Police Relations, and the addition of protections for sexual orientation, gender identity, and age discrimination in the Columbus Human Rights Commission's Rules & Regulations. One supporter stated that the foundation of the Commission is quite strong and woven into the fabric of the community due to the efforts of these three (3) individuals. Another supporter said that Palmer, Smith, and Tinsley worked steadfastly together to foster a sense of community during difficult times, enabling them to take the mission of the Commission into the neighborhoods that needed it most.



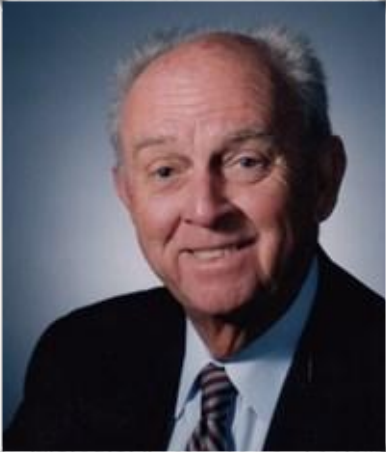
LORRAINE SMITH



ARLETTE COOPER TINSLEY

Collectively, the 2015 Laws Award Recipients have been heavily involved in the community, including organizations such as, but not limited to, the Heritage Fund, NAACP, Laws Foundation, Bartholomew Area Legal Aid, kidscommons Board, United Way of Bartholomew County, Columbus Rotary, IUPUC Diversity Council, Bartholomew County School Corporation Diversity Committee, Mill Race Center, Board of Zoning Appeals, African American Association, Centerstone of America Board, and the African American Fund.

In Memoriam



Rex Breeden

Fair Housing Advocate, founding member of
William R. Laws Memorial Scholarship

1920-2014

Acknowledgements

THE COMMISSION THANKS:

Kristen Brown, Mayor

Rick Weinheimer, Keynote Speaker

Tim Shuffett, City Council Liaison

Jeffrey Logston, City Attorney

Donors of Complimentary Dinner Tickets

On The Spot Catering & Staff

Volunteer Action Network

Columbus Indiana Children's Choir, Students & Staff

Trudi Smith, Photographer

TD Advertising

Hoosier Sporting Goods

Brainstorm Print

The UPS Store